

That supreme fact is almost too great to be grasped and believed. Our mind can only accept it in faith. **It is this central truth that elevates the Catholic Faith above other Christian faiths.**

If we truly believe what the Eucharist is, then this must effect **how** we prepare to receive it, **how** we receive it, and **how** we pray afterwards. We should receive the Eucharist in the same manner of humility as if we were at our Final Judgement, while the few minutes after receiving the Eucharist are the most important minutes of our day. It is then we must talk to God in humility, in love, in trust, and make our prayers of praise, thanks, and petition, restate our unworthiness to receive so great a gift and, finally, listen to him in silence.

The Benefits and Implications of Receiving the Eucharist

The very presence of Jesus himself ensures us of an ongoing source of sanctifying grace to renew us constantly. Moreover, this grace **destroys the effects of any venial sins**, helps protect us against the temptations of more serious sins, and helps transform us into ever more charitable Christians because the Holy Spirit is poured into our souls (Rm.5).

The Eucharist is the most perfect way that the graces won at Calvary **are distributed to us.**



Because the Eucharist is the sharing in Christ's very being, then everyone who receives the Eucharist is simultaneously united with each other in his **Mystical Body**. This sacrament is not just of individual importance, therefore, it is the sacrament, par excellence, **of unity for all Catholics** throughout the world.

In the same way as the Eucharist unites the Church worldwide because it is the Mystical Body of Christ, it also includes those who have died and have not yet been united with the Father. The Mass is as much for them as it is for us and that is why it can be offered up for the repose of the souls of the dead. That is the reality and power of Christ's Mystical Body

The Eucharist is also a truly **Trinitarian event**, realised at every Mass. The changing of the bread and wine into **Christ's** body and blood is achieved through the power of **the Holy Spirit**, before being offered to the **Father**.

The Mass

"Do This In Memory of Me"

Reminding Ourselves of The Mass' Uniqueness and Beauty

8.

The Mass and the Sacred Banquet of Holy Communion



The Mass is the Most Important Part of the Church's Liturgy

The Liturgy consists of those public acts of worship that unite all Catholics together, all those living everywhere in the world as well as those who have died, the angels, the saints and Our Blessed Lady, in a truly magnificent Communion of Saints and, in turn, this Church of Christ becomes united with the Blessed Trinity of Father, Son and Holy Spirit

In the Mass we are, therefore, in the greatest sense possible on this earth, part of the Mystical Body of Christ

The Paschal events of Jesus' Last Supper, his Death and Resurrection are re-presented, as if we were actually present at the time of their historical occurrence. That is why the Mass is regarded as being sacrificial.

In the Mass, there is the real presence of Jesus

As we go to receive Holy Communion, we go to receive Our Lord Jesus within us. Therefore, approach him with the humility of love and fear, as if we were walking towards God for our own judgment.

The Real Presence of Jesus

The Liturgy of the Eucharist

In the **Preparation of the Gifts**, the priest anticipates Jesus real presence in the Eucharist: "Through your goodness we have received the bread we offer you .. it will become for us the bread of life", and similarly for the wine.



The **Preface for Holy Thursday** specifically states:

"As we eat his flesh that was sacrificed for us, we are made strong and, as we drink his blood that was poured out for us, we are washed clean".

The **words of the Eucharistic Prayers** make clear the reality of Jesus' presence, under the appearance of the bread and wine, at the Consecration of the Mass, particularly the invocation of the Holy Spirit - the Epiclesis:

"So that it may become for us the *body and blood* of your most beloved Son, Our Lord, Jesus Christ" (Eucharistic Prayer 1, similar in the others)

and the **Words of Consecration** that Jesus himself used at the Last Supper:

"Take this all of you and eat of it, for this is *my body* which will be given for you", and, "Take this all of you and drink from it , for this is the chalice of *my blood* .. Do this in memory of me".

After the consecration, there are these further references to the miracle that has taken place:

Eucharistic Prayer 1: "So that all of us, who through this participation at the altar, receive the *most holy body and blood* of your Son".

Eucharistic Prayer 2: "Humbly, we pray that, partaking of *the body and blood of Christ*, we may be gathered into one by the Holy Spirit".

Eucharistic Prayer 3: Grant that we, who are nourished by *the body and blood of your Son* and filled with his Holy Spirit, may become one body, one spirit in Christ".

Eucharistic Prayer 4: "We offer you his *body and blood* the sacrifice acceptable to you which brings salvation to the world".

The Lord's Prayer

The reference in the 'Our Father' to "Give us this day our daily bread" is not only a request for God to provide us with our material needs but, more importantly, our spiritual needs, particularly the Bread of the Eucharist.

The Breaking of Bread by the Priest

As the priest dips a small portion of the host in the chalice he says: "May this mingling of the *body and blood* of Our Lord Jesus Christ bring eternal life to us who receive it" and, after the Agnus Dei prayer, the 'Lamb of God', he says quietly: "Free me by this, *your most holy body and blood*, from all my sins and from every evil".

The Prayer of Humility

The prayer of humility is our declaration that we truly believe we are about to receive *Jesus himself, body blood soul and divinity*, and that we are so unworthy of this great gift that we are only able to receive him by his cleansing action on our soul: "Lord I am not worthy that *you* should enter under my roof but only say the word and my soul shall be healed".



Receiving Holy Communion

As if to make sure we are in no doubt about what we are doing when we receive Holy Communion, the priest or Eucharistic minister says to us in giving the host: "The *Body of Christ*", and in replying "Amen", we declare our assent to this great gift and truth. A similar form of words is used is in the giving of the Blood of Christ under the appearances of wine.

The Significance of the Eucharist

The Constitution on the Church, Lumen Gentium, of the Second Vatican Council, describes the Eucharist as 'the source and summit of the Christian life'. It is the greatest sacrament because it is Our Lord himself truly and really present. When a person receives Holy Communion it is an almost unbelievable truth that **Jesus has entered into their very being and in so doing that person has become absorbed into Christ's very essence.**